

[Tribune](#)

Paul Giblin

U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell is urging the Navy to consider naming a future aircraft carrier the USS Arizona, a name that will be forever associated with the raid on Pearl Harbor, the attack that propelled the United States into World War II 66 years ago today.

Re-issuing the name Arizona will help Americans remember and honor the 1,177 crew members who died when the battleship that bore the name sank in Hawaii after being bombed.

"I believe that revitalizing the honorable name USS Arizona will not only honor those veterans, but it will also symbolize the fighting spirit of our great county," Mitchell wrote in a letter to Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter on Thursday.

Mitchell suggested using the name for the second Gerald R. Ford-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. Construction is proposed to begin in 2012, with an expected launch in 2018.

Mitchell raised the suggestion at the request of Mesa resident Dan Tideman, a Vietnam-era Navy veteran.

"This is a just a grass-roots, home-grown campaign. They came up to me and told me about it and I thought it was a terrific idea," Mitchell told the Tribune.

Names for Navy ships traditionally have been chosen and announced by the secretary of the Navy, though in recent years Congress has proposed and sometimes passed legislation expressing its wishes for specific names for particular ships.

Rules for giving certain types of names to certain types of ships have evolved over time, according to report issued by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service on Jan. 17.

The 10 most recently named aircraft carriers have been named for eight U.S. presidents and two Congressmen, a trend that continued through January when the Navy announced that the first in the new class of carriers will bear the name USS Gerald R. Ford, according to Ronald O'Rourke, a researcher for the Congressional Research Service. The Gerald R. Ford is expected to be launched 2014.

Also, Virginia-class attack submarines are being named for states.

It would be appropriate to name an aircraft carrier USS Arizona because the Navy hasn't built a battleship since World War II, Mitchell said. The battleship remains where it sank in Pearl Harbor, a grave for more than 900 servicemen who were killed during the attack.

It was decommissioned Dec. 29, 1941. A memorial was built at water level above the ship in 1962.

Tideman has been gathering support for re-issuing the name USS Arizona for a year, he said.

"I gathered some information from different sources and basically put it together and came up with the idea that a brand new aircraft carrier cost \$13 billion and hasn't been named yet. Why not name it USS Arizona?" he said.

He noted that one of the Navy's other traditions is naming new ships in tribute to previous ships.

Three Navy ships have used the name Arizona. The first was a side-wheel steamer, which was launched in 1859. It saw action during the Civil War and was captured, re-named and used by the Confederacy for a time. Later, it was re-captured by the Union and was destroyed in a fire in 1865, according to the Great White Fleet Organization, which is dedicated to naval history.

The second was a screw frigate that originally was named Neshaminy and was launched in 1865, but was never fully completed. It was renamed Arizona in 1869 and renamed yet again three months later as the Nevada.

The ship spent most of its time undergoing repairs or in dock, and by 1874 the Navy found it to be so poorly constructed, the Navy sold it in an incomplete state, according to Great White Fleet.

The battleship was launched in 1915 and saw action in World War I before it was sunk on Battleship Row on Oahu in 1941.